

FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

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more public outreach with regard to the project. All of the items passed, including the first one: a \$340,000 expense for architectural renderings needed to keep the school project on schedule. That item took up the bulk of the discussion.

This was a unique expense because the referendum of the \$46 million renovation won't occur until October 7. So voters needed to make a leap of faith that these plans were an acceptable expense. The vote was 121 YES to 46 NO. The plans are needed now because otherwise the project would be delayed a year and that delay would probably raise the cost of the entire project another \$3.6 million.

As I mentioned, many questions and concerns were brought forward by those in attendance including questions about the cost and direct effect on one's tax bill. The good news is that a series of opportunities are scheduled for people to learn as much as possible about the renovation project. I strongly encourage you to attend at least one of these. The first one is a community forum in the Sherman School at 7pm on Wednesday, August 30. Another is a community forum on Saturday, September 9 at 10am in the Sherman School. The final community forum is on Tuesday, September 19 at 7pm in Charter Hall (the firehouse). Also, there is a Board of Education meeting on Wednesday, September 6 at 7pm in the Sherman School library. Ultimately, this all brings us to an in-person vote, a referendum, from 8am to 8pm on Saturday, October 7 where the next steps of the renovation project will be decided one way or the other by a vote.

The Board of Selectmen will hold its monthly regularly scheduled meeting this Thursday, August 24 at 7pm in Mallory Town Hall. The agenda will be on the Town website and features several important items including a discussion on the Sherman School bonding. On the agenda is a new item that we are trying to rush along concerning Allen's Cove and the need for a "No Wake" zone in that active boat-traffic area. Pickle Ball courts are back on the agenda and I have applied to the State for a STEAP grant (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) to help us fund that. I applied for \$240,000. Fingers crossed. You might note that the work currently underway to improve the buildings up at Happy Acres Farm is through a STEAP grant that we applied for and was awarded two years ago.

Many people are contacting me about the tree removal in front of the Sherman School – mostly pines and mostly healthy trees. They aren't pleased. This work was done by Eversource and conducted within the State right-of-way (not the Town's) and is in conjunction with new wiring being implemented by Eversource for increased connectivity. The company did not want to install new wires and equipment without first completely clearing any trees/branches near those wires. In my opinion there are other more threatening trees to our wires than these were, but Eversource did what they thought they needed to do. I will say that they have been responsive to the threatening trees that public works and I have directed them to cut. But we did not direct them to cut these trees at the school.

The Sherman Church has a long history of community outreach whether it's helping people in need or providing fun get-togethers where people gather as neighbors. This Saturday, August 26, from 5:30pm to 8 pm the Sherman Church is sponsoring a wonderful event "Family Fun Night." Everyone is welcomed to attend and folks of all ages can expect games, crafts, pizza, s'mores, and campfire singing. This is a great opportunity for new Sherman residents of all ages to meet your neighbors and have fun doing it!

The Town Meeting that I referenced in my last column turned out to be quite well attended and a robust gathering. Many questions and concerns were raised about the Sherman School renovation project and that speaks to the need for much



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TOWN OF SHERMAN